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17

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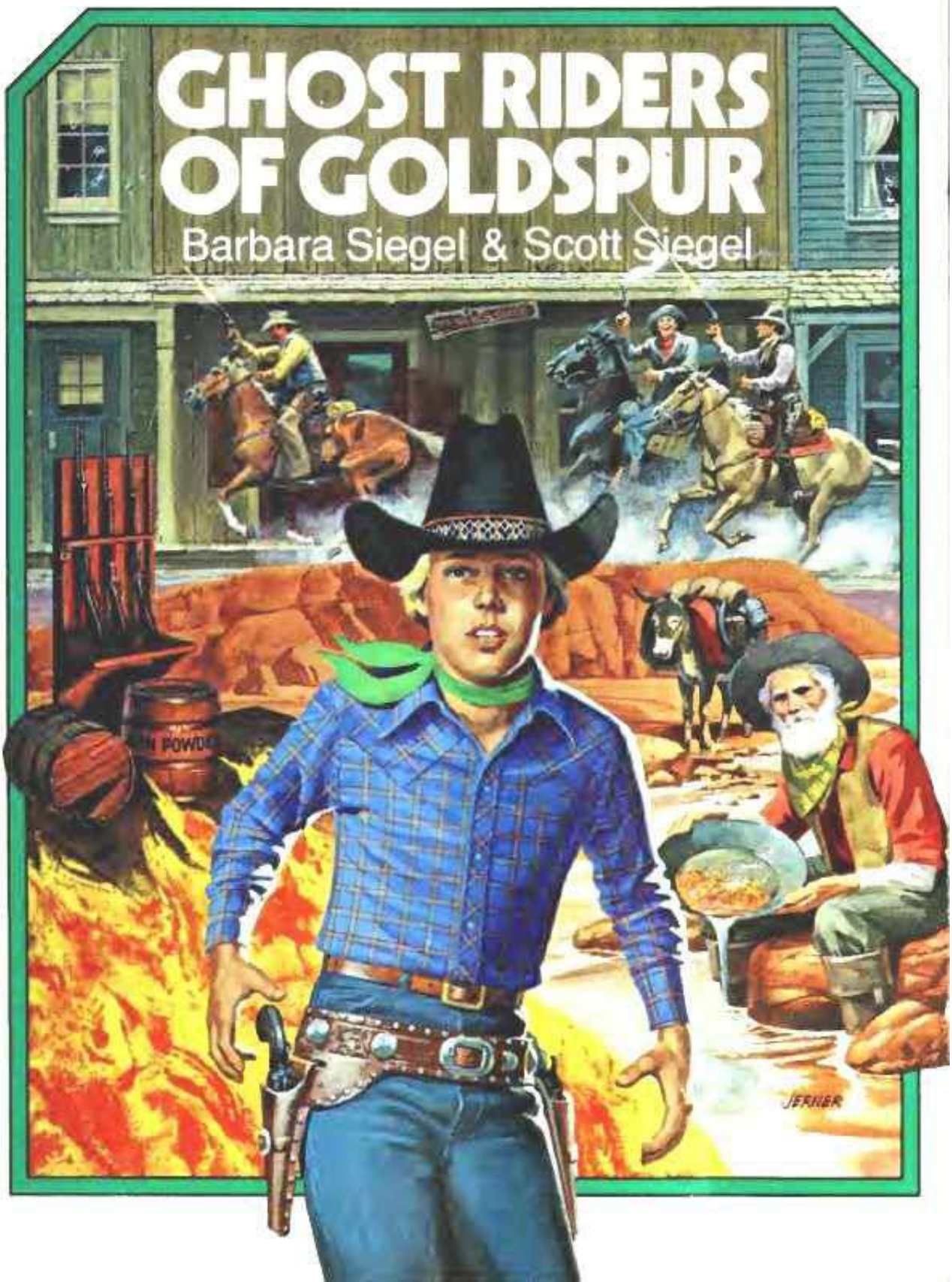
GHOST RIDERS OF GOLDSPUR

Barbara Siegel & Scott Siegel



GHOST RIDERS OF GOLDSPUR

Barbara Siegel
& Scott Siegel

Illustrations by Ray Lago

SCHOLASTIC INC.
New York Toronto London Auckland Sydney Tokyo

In loving memory of
Shirley Siegel and Samson Teich—
Though they never met,
thank goodness their children did!

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ISBN 0-590-33235-X

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Printed in the U.S.A. 01

BEWARE!!!
DO NOT READ THIS BOOK FROM BEGINNING TO END!

You are about to take a journey into the Old West, a journey like nothing else you've ever experienced — but *only* if you follow the directions at the bottom of each page. Think carefully before you make a decision. The wrong choice can put you in the middle of a shootout or at the end of a hangman's noose. The right choice could make you famous.

What happens depends on you. If you get into trouble, turn back and choose a different way out. If you're having a good time, keep going.

The Old West was a dangerous place. It calls for clear thinking, quick decisions, and the willingness to be bold. If you make the right moves, you can enjoy many adventures full of glory — and still find your way safely back to the present. If you make the wrong moves, you may become a Ghost Rider yourself, galloping through these pages—forever!

Okay, pardner, it's time to saddle up!

Now turn to PAGE 2.

"One hundred years ago, on this very day," the tourist guide announces dramatically, "the legend of Goldspur was born."

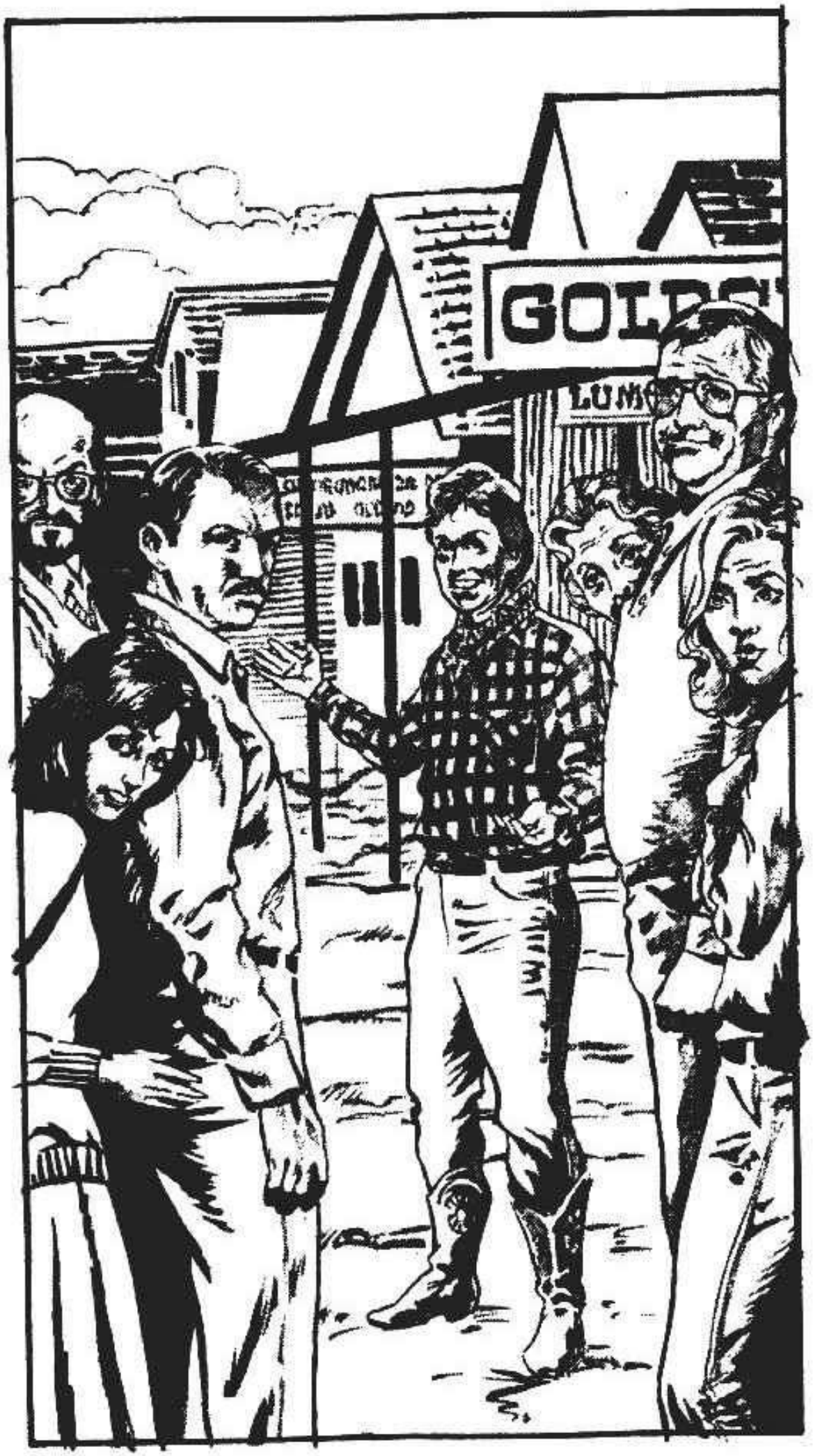
"One whole century!" you gasp loudly in amazement. "On this exact day!"

Your mother, father, and everybody else in the crowd turn to look at you. Embarrassed, you take a step backward and pretend to glance at the storefronts of this recreated Western ghost town.

The guide quickly retrieves everyone's attention—including yours—by saying, "It was noon and the church bell was ringing when the three Harley brothers were first seen riding down the middle of Main Street. When they finally rode out after sunset, the bank vault was empty and most of the town was burning.

"Some said that the light from the blaze was as bright as day and that the outlaws could be seen riding like three ghosts into the flickering shadows of the desert night. And it was then that the legend began. According to legend, the Harley brothers are destined to ride forever in darkness until they return to Goldspur to face justice."

Go on to PAGE 4.


GOLDS
LUNC

Suddenly, the bell in the church steeple begins to peal. At this very hour, the Harley brothers rode into Goldspur.

A strong gust of wind sweeps down Main Street, kicking up a blinding dust storm. You cover your eyes and cough, but you can still hear the ringing of the bell — ten . . . eleven . . . twelve.

When you open your eyes, your parents, the guide, and the rest of the tourists are gone! Disappeared! In their place, you're astonished to see farmers loading supplies into wagons, fancy ladies shopping in stores, and cowboys lounging in front of the saloon. But your surprise turns to fear when you see something else — three mean-looking desperadoes riding right down the middle of Main Street!

It seems impossible, but somehow you're back in the Goldspur of one hundred years ago. And you're the only one who knows what the Harley brothers are going to do! The question is, what are you going to do?

If you decide to run down the street shouting a warning like Paul Revere, turn to PAGE 16.

If you decide to rush into the sheriff's office just behind you and give your warning to the local lawman, turn to PAGE 31.

If you have no idea what to do and wish that someone would give you some direction, turn to PAGE 23.

You are not feeling lucky enough to get past the Harleys in one piece. Still, you've got to get to the stagecoach.

You see a boy about your age and call him over. "Listen, here's two bits," you tell him, acting just like Mr. Darby. "Get over to the stagecoach driver and tell him to pick me up right here as fast as he can."

"What? And get caught in the line of fire when the Harley brothers start shooting their way out of the bank?" cries the boy. "Are you crazy?"

Go on to PAGE 6.

"You mean you know about that?" you exclaim in disbelief.

"Well, sure," he replies matter-of-factly. "Why shouldn't I? We've been reliving this every single day for the last hundred years."

You're stunned. "If everyone knows what's going to happen, why don't they do something about it?"

"Can't," says the boy with a shrug. "That's the way it is with legends. As long as people keep telling our story, we're doomed to keep acting it out." Then he leans up close to you and whispers, "You'll be a part of the legend, too, if you stay here much longer."

That clinches it! You've got to get out of Goldspur! But how?

If you think ringing the bell in the church steeple 12 times might reverse time and get you back to the present, turn to PAGE 38.

If you decide to jump onto the back of a farmer's wagon that's heading out of town, turn to PAGE 42.

The stagecoach is ready to leave town. That's a lucky break. You jump inside, hoping the ten-mile ride to Fort Benner won't take too long. If everything works out all right, there should be plenty of time for the cavalry to save Goldspur.

But everything isn't going to work out all right. That becomes instantly clear when the driver grabs you by the arm and drags you out of the stagecoach.

"Where do you think you're going?" he demands.

"To Fort Benner," you reply, rubbing your shoulder.

"Is that a fact?" he says sarcastically. "Let's see your ticket."

"My ticket?"

"You heard me."

You don't have any money. How are you going to pay for this trip? The only things you have with you are a Ronald McDonald wristwatch and an instant camera.

If you try to trade your watch for a ride to Fort Benner, turn to PAGE 47.

If you try to trade a photo of the driver for a ride to Fort Benner, turn to PAGE 13.

8

"Look, this may sound kind of stupid," you admit, "but . . . uh . . . what century is this, the nineteenth or the twentieth?"

"Cut!" yells a voice across the street.

Startled, you look over and see a camera crew in the doorway of the Goldspur Saloon.

Now you're really confused.

The man named Darby smiles at you and explains, "When the church bell rang, we started a dust storm with our wind machines and then herded everyone — except you — off the street. You see, we're filming a TV special on legends — on how they affect the mind — and you seemed perfect for the show."

"I guess I looked pretty dumb, huh?"

"Well, think of it this way: Wouldn't you rather be safe on film than trapped in the middle of a hundred-year-old gun battle?"

He's got a point. You should enjoy your fleeting stardom on the tube, because the next time you visit Goldspur you may come to a very different . . .

END

You start digging your warning message into the dirt with your imitation-leather cowboy boots. You get only as far as the letter "B" before the Harley brothers, carrying big bags of money, start shooting their way out of the bank.

The farmers dive for cover underneath their half-loaded wagons, refusing to abandon their supplies.

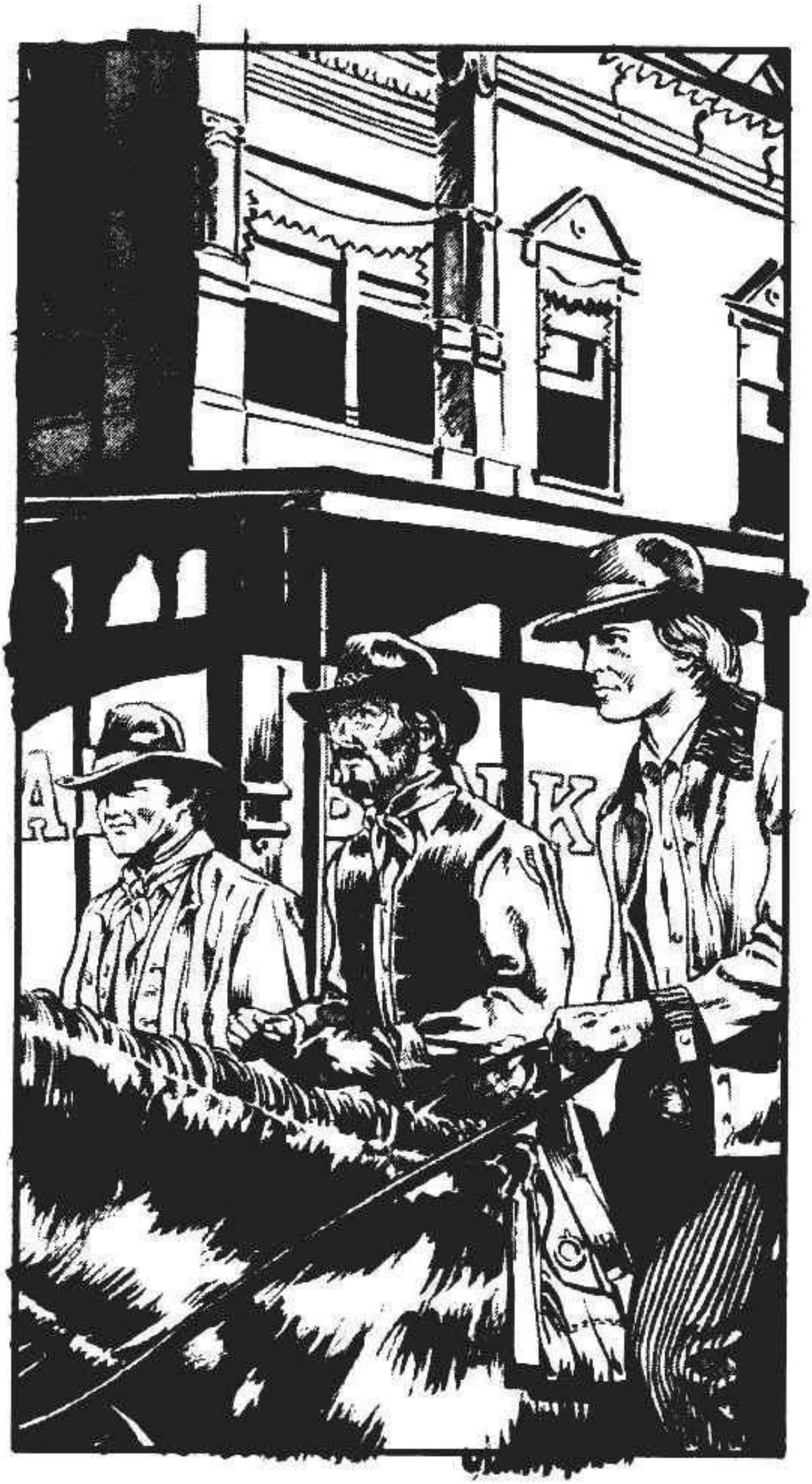
When no one stands up to the Harley brothers, they boldly begin attacking every business along Main Street, shattering windows and looting stores. The town is ripe for the taking—but so are the big bags of money the Harley brothers are carrying.

Soon, you're right behind them. They're setting fire to the gunsmith shop, and in moments the flames will reach the huge barrel of gunpowder in the back of the store. The explosion from that will demolish half the town!

You've got to make a difficult choice. Should you stick with your daring plan? Or try to put out the fire? Your fate and the fate of Goldspur hang in the balance.

If you choose to stick with your plan and lead the Harleys out of town, turn to PAGE 27.

If you choose to put out the fire, turn to PAGE 33.



"I was just wondering, could you . . . uh . . . direct me to the stagecoach? I don't seem to know where it is."

"New in town, huh?"

"Very."

"All right. It's in front of the hotel around the corner," he explains, pointing up the street. "Make a left turn where those three fellas are hitchin' up their horses."

Oh, no! Those "three fellas" are the Harley brothers and they're leaving their horses directly in front of the First National Bank of Goldspur.

Before you can say another word, Mr. Darby is gone.

If you're lucky and get to the stagecoach in time, you can get out of Goldspur alive. If you aren't lucky, the Harley brothers will come out of that bank with their pistols blazing and you'll be right in their gunsights.

If you feel lucky, turn to PAGE 20.
If you don't feel lucky, turn to PAGE 5.

12

If you don't like the tickling idea, you're going to have to think of something else.

Now that you're up close to the outlaw holding the money, you see how big he is — how big *all* of the Harley brothers are. That's when you remember that old expression: "The bigger they are, the harder they fall." And that gives you a new idea. You'll trip this big outlaw and then grab the money when he hits the ground.

Great idea . . . or so you think, until you stick your foot in his path and he stumbles and falls *on top of you!*

Your head hits the ground and you're knocked unconscious. When you wake up, you're still in the Old West of Goldspur, except now it's just past sunset. You look out into the desert and, through the flickering light of the burning town, see three horsemen whose shadowy outlines appear ghostlike riding into the darkness. This scene reminds you of something, but you can't remember what. In fact, you can't remember anything. You've got amnesia!

Maybe if you pick up this book again and start at the beginning, it will all come back to you . . . uh . . . whoever you are.

THE END

"I'll take your picture if you'll give me a ride to Fort Benner," you offer.

"Take my picture?" he asks, confused. "What picture? And where are you gonna take it?"

"No. I mean I'll shoot a picture with this."

"You can't shoot nothin' with that," he says. "That ain't no gun."

"Of course it isn't," you reply, getting almost as confused as he is. "This is a camera. When I point it at you and push this button, a piece of paper will come out and, in sixty seconds, it'll develop into a picture of *you*."

"You think I was born yesterday?" he asks. "I never heard of anything so ridiculous in my whole life. Next thing, you'll be tellin' me people can walk on the moon."

"They can!"

"You're a persistent little scamp," he says, shaking his head. "And you're startin' to annoy me!"

As he turns away, you grab his shirt and say, "If I can prove that I'm telling the truth by taking your picture, will you give me a ride to Fort Benner?"

Go on to PAGE 14.

"If you can get a picture of me from inside that little doohicky," he says smugly, "I'll take you anywhere you like . . . even the moon."

"Deal! Now stand over there," you say, positioning him in front of the stagecoach, "and don't move."

The driver reluctantly stands still.

"Okay," you say softly as he comes into focus through your viewfinder. "Now say, 'cheese.' "

"Cheese?"

Click.

You've shot the picture and the film slides out of the camera. Sixty seconds later, the driver looks at the photo and then proudly proclaims, "That's the best-lookin' dude I've ever seen!"

"What about my ride to Fort Benner?"

"I can keep this here picture?"

"Sure."

"Then hop in. Next stop, Fort Benner!"

Go on to PAGE 21.

"Looks like we caught ourselves a couple of desert rats," laughs the leader of the Harley brothers.

"Desert rats?" snarls the old prospector with indignation. "I don't know who you rascals are, but you better watch your mouths. Kid Colt, here," he says proudly, pointing at you, "could've blown you to bits a little while ago. For some reason — that I'll never understand — the Kid decided to let you miserable coyotes live. But if I were you, I'd count myself lucky and skedaddle out of here before you push the Kid too far!"

"Shh," you whisper to the old man. "They're the Harley brothers."

"Harley brothers?" the old prospector says loudly. "I never heard of no Harley brothers. They're just a bunch of low-lifes, if you ask me."

One of the Harley brothers overhears the old man and shouts, "They know who we are! If we let them live, they'll be able to tell the law which way we're going!" All three outlaws instantly cock their pistols and get ready to pull their triggers. . . .

You and the old man are going to die right here and now unless you think of a way to keep them from shooting!

Think fast and hurry to PAGE 44.

16

These people must be warned, you decide. "Get your guns!" you yell, racing across the street toward the farmers in front of the General Store. "The Harley brothers are about to rob the bank!"

The farmers just keep loading their supplies, ignoring you.

"Didn't you hear me?" you shout, exasperated. "The Harley brothers are going to steal everything and burn Goldspur to the ground. You haven't got much time!"

Still no reaction from the farmers.

"What's the matter, are you guys deaf?"

One farmer looks right at you, slowly wipes the sweat off his face with a handkerchief, and mutters, "Looks like it's gonna be a hot one today."

Suddenly you figure it out — you're invisible! The farmers can't see or hear you. It's as if you left the present, but you haven't made it all the way into the past. You don't know how or why it happened, but it doesn't really change things. You've still got to warn these people. Maybe you should try to spell "Bank Robbery" in the dirt. But it also occurs to you that, because you're invisible, you might even be able to stop the Harley brothers yourself.

If you choose to spell "Bank Robbery" in the dirt, turn to PAGE 9.

If you choose to take on the Harley brothers single-handedly, turn to PAGE 24.

The driver is right. He removes the wheel from its axle, and with both of you working on it, it doesn't take long to fix. But before you can put the wheel back on, you and the driver look up and see a storm blowing down from the mountains. There's thunder, lightning, and heavy rain whipping across the desert — and it's heading your way.

"We'll never make it to Fort Benner now," yells the driver over the rising wind. "We've got to head for high ground or we'll get caught in a flash flood!"

"Come on," you complain, still holding the wheel, "you're not going to let a little thunderstorm scare you, are you?"

Before he can answer your question, a bolt of lightning screams across the desert sky, striking you right where you stand. . . .

Turn to PAGE 46, quick as a flash!

18

A mist swirls around you as if you're in the eye of a tornado. But it isn't wind that's whirling and whipping past you, it's time! History itself is racing before your eyes like a super-speeded-up film.

In the blink of an eye, it suddenly stops. Your first thought is that you're cold. And no wonder — it's winter! You're standing all alone on a snowy riverbank in the middle of the night.

While shivering — and wondering where Merlin's potion brought you — you hear the sound of someone approaching. You duck into the bushes and listen.

"General Washington, our situation is hopeless," says a voice.

"I know. We're in desperate need of a victory, but there's nothing we can do. This is a very sad Christmas Eve, General Arnold. I'm truly at my wit's end."

"Perhaps you should surrender," suggests the man named General Arnold.

"Do you really think that would be wise?" asks Washington.

Go on to PAGE 88.

20

You're feeling lucky and decide to take your chances. You run as fast as you can up the street, hoping to be well past the bank before the gunfire starts.

No such luck.

Just as you near their horses, the Harley brothers back out of the bank, guns blazing, shooting wildly up and down the street.

They're looking everywhere but at their horses. That means there is still one way left to escape. You unhitch one of the horses, leap onto its back, and start galloping out of town with bullets whistling over your head.

You've gotten away!

But to where? You ride and ride, and by the time it grows dark, you're hopelessly lost. Now *you're* the ghost rider.

Try your "luck" again some other time . . . if you ever get back to the present.

THE END

You climb inside, and a moment later the stage lurches forward and you're on your way!

Once out of town, you stick your head out the window and see that the road ahead winds through the desert and then up into a mountain range.

"How long to the fort?" you call out to the driver.

"Should be there in about two and a half hours," he shouts back over the clatter of the stage.

You settle back inside the coach, feeling very satisfied with yourself. You figure the cavalry can cover this same distance in half the time the stage takes. That means you'll be back in Goldspur with help by the middle of the afternoon—in plenty of time to catch the Harley brothers.

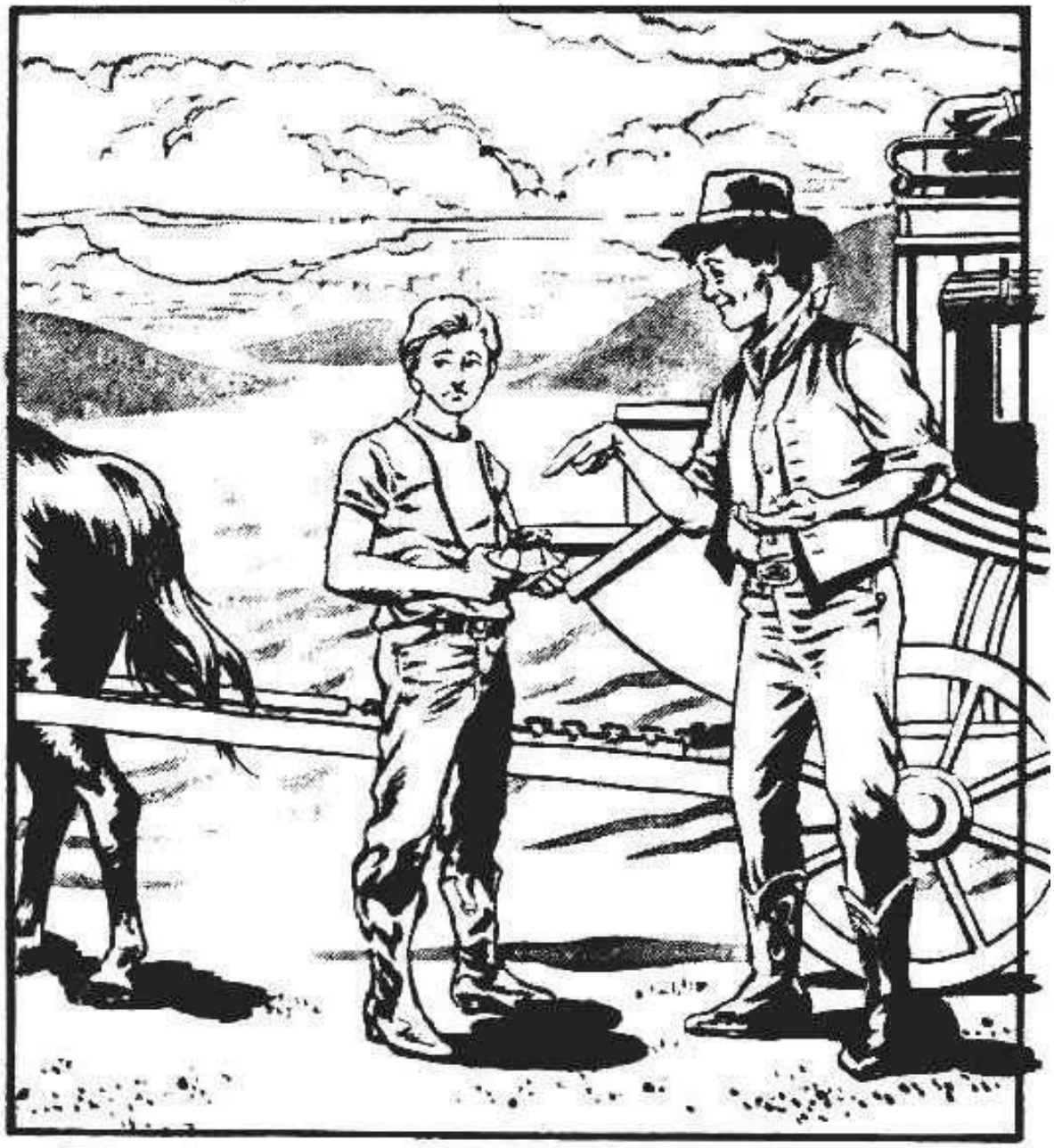
Yes, everything is working out just fine . . . until the stagecoach comes to a skidding halt!

The driver comes down. "Danged wheel broke," he says. "We'll be here awhile till I can fix it."

Go on to PAGE 22.

Suddenly, the driver has an idea. "If you help me, it might not take too long. Or . . . if you gave me that there camera of yours, I might just be persuaded to loan you a horse from the team."

You don't mind giving up the camera, but you've never ridden a horse before. What should you do?



If you choose to help fix the wheel, turn to PAGE 17.

If you choose to borrow the horse, turn to PAGE 29.

You rub your eyes, but before you can open them, you feel a hand clamp down on your shoulder. Practically jumping out of the cowboy boots you bought at the mall last weekend, you whirl around to face a burly cowboy carrying a big-barreled rifle.

"Here's two bits," he says, tossing you a piece of silver. "Get over to the stagecoach and tell the driver I'll be there in a couple of minutes."

"Who . . . who are you?" you manage to stutter.

"Tell him it's Darby. I'm ridin' shotgun today, fillin' in for Texas Jack."

In a trembling voice you say, "Mr. Darby, would you tell me something?"

"I ain't got all day, kid," he snarls. "What do you want?"

If you decide to ask him whether it's the nineteenth or twentieth century, turn to PAGE 8.

If you decide that the safe thing to do is to just ask him where to find the stagecoach, turn to PAGE 11.

24

You decide to fight the Harleys. After all, they can't even see you.

You open up the door of the First National Bank and spot the Harley brothers cleaning out the vault. Terrified customers and employees huddle in a corner. When the door slams behind you, the Harleys turn and shoot instinctively at the sound. Invisible or not, there is no way out of this one. You cover your eyes and wait to feel the bullets.

You wait and wait, but don't feel anything. Suddenly it's very quiet. Peeking around your hands, you see that everyone is gone — except a very modern-looking guard sitting behind a desk. You are back in the present.

"But I have to get the Harley brothers!"

"Get who, son?" asks the startled guard.

"The Harleys! The Harleys!" you yell.

"Now take it easy," he says. "That sun out there can really fry your brain."

Suddenly you know you could never have defeated the Harleys. If you had, all of history might have been changed. You just can't change things that have already happened.

You hurry down the street and catch up with your tour—knowing that at this very moment, somewhere in time, the Harley brothers are burning Goldspur.

THE END

"You can have a big victory, sir," you begin, "if you'll just get some boats, gather your troops, and row across the river. You'll catch the enemy completely off guard. The last thing they expect is a surprise Christmas Eve attack. It'll be the turning point of the war!"

"By thunder! Why didn't *I* think of that?" Washington says jubilantly as he reaches out and shakes your hand.

"You're not going to listen to this . . . this child, George, are you?" asks General Arnold.

"I most certainly am, Benedict. It's a bold plan and I'd be letting our new country down if I didn't try everything in my power. Why, to do less would be treason!"

You can't resist. Softly, so only Benedict Arnold can hear, you say, "You wouldn't want to be a traitor, now, would you?"

Enraged, Benedict Arnold draws a pistol from his belt. You hit a nerve. And now he's going to hit you with a bullet—right between the eyes!

If you think you have a chance to run away, turn to PAGE 36.

If you think your only chance is to stand and fight, turn to PAGE 41.

26

The youngest Harley rises menacingly from behind the bushes, holding a knife high. "You ain't gonna be around to tell nobody nothin'," he sneers.

You're just about to yell for help when out of the bushes hops a white rabbit. You can sure use a streak of good luck right now, so you reach out and touch its foot with your toe.

There's a sudden flash of light! When it disappears, the ropes have fallen away. It's morning, and you can tell you've returned to the present because there's an airplane flying overhead.

"What's going on?" asks the old man. What's he doing here?! He must have been propelled into the present when you were.

You do your best to explain.

"That's all well and good," he says as if he heard stories like yours every day. "It don't matter to me what year this is as long as I can get my gold."

That's right! No one knew about the gold except you and the miner. You search for the gold mine, and it's still there, undisturbed. The old prospector is so thrilled that he makes you a partner even though you're not Kid Colt. Now you've got another name: Kid Millions!

THE END

You decide it's best to get the Harleys out of town before they cause any more harm. One of the Harley brothers is gripping three bags of money in one big fist. He's a mean-looking character with a jagged scar running down the left side of his face. You want to get those bags out of his hand, but how are you going to do it?

A thought pops into your head. Would he drop the money if you tickled him?

If this strikes you as a stupid, half-baked idea, turn to PAGE 12.

If this strikes you as an idea that might work, turn to PAGE 51.

28

The fire is blazing hot. At least the smoke isn't too bad. It seems to be rising. But what good is that if you're going to be burned to a crisp?

The wall where the stairs used to be is now a wall of flames. Soon the ceiling above you is going to come crashing down. If only you could somehow protect yourself from the fire. If only . . . wait . . . there *is* a way, you suddenly realize. But will it work?

There, in the back of the cellar, you spot several huge barrels of root beer. It's the saloon's storage area. If you could get inside one of those barrels, the liquid might either save you from the fire or boil you alive like a lobster. But there is another choice—you could use all that root beer to put out the fire. Which should you choose?

If you choose to get inside one of the root-beer barrels, turn to PAGE 34.

If you choose to use the root beer to try to put out the fire, turn to PAGE 76.

You make quite a sight on the back of that big black mare. In fact, you wouldn't believe you were actually sitting up there if the stagecoach driver didn't snap your picture with his new camera and show it to you.

"Well, I better get going," you say nervously.

"I'll see you at the fort," offers the stagecoach driver. "And don't forget," he adds, "stay on this road no matter what. If you get lost, you'll never come out of this desert alive!"

"Right," you answer absently. "I guess this is it. So long."

You gently tap your boot heels into the horse's side—and it takes off like a shot!

"Whoa!" you yell. "Whoa!" But the horse pays no attention.

Hang on, pardner, and turn to PAGE 40.

30

The rustling sounds get closer. You hope it's someone who will help. If you're wrong and it's really the knife-wielding young Harley brother, you'll never see the morning light.

But who could possibly be out there trying to save you? Maybe you should yell to the other Harley brothers after all. Yeah. That's the smart thing to do . . .

You take a deep breath, and just as you're about to call out for help, a voice from the bushes whispers, "Don't move—I'll cut you loose."

You're saved! You can hardly believe it!

A few seconds later a knife cuts the rope that holds you and the old prospector together.

"Who are you?" asks the old man.

"Don't you recognize me? I'm Kid Colt."

Before either you or the old man can speak, a shot rings out, ricocheting off a rock right next to your head!

Go on to PAGE 37.

You rush into the sheriff's office only to find that there's no one there. Tacked on the wall is a note from the lawman that reads:

> Things have been real quiet in town so I decided to go fishing. See ya tomorrow.
>
> Sheriff Sam Aarons

Tomorrow? The town will be destroyed by tonight! You rummage through some papers on the sheriff's desk, looking for the name of a deputy—or anyone who can help fight the Harley brothers. What you find is a short letter that says:

> Dear Sheriff Aarons,
>
> It was a pleasure seeing you again. Thanks for guarding the payroll on the stage—even if it was just a ten-mile trip. If you ever need our assistance, please feel free to call on my troops here at Fort Benner.
>
> Most sincerely,
> Colonel Ty Roper
> Commanding Officer

That's it! That's the answer!

Go on to PAGE 32.

32

You decide to take the stagecoach to the army post and then bring back the U.S. Cavalry! Boy, will those Harley brothers be surprised when the bugler sounds the charge and the boys in blue come galloping down the street with their sabers drawn!

It occurs to you then that you can get the troops to Goldspur even faster by going to the telegraph office and sending Colonel Roper a wire. But unless you can convince the telegraph operator that you're telling the truth, he might refuse to send the message. You might be better off in the long run by taking the stagecoach. That is, if there's a stage leaving today for Fort Benner.

Which is it going to be: telegraph or stagecoach? The choice is yours.

If you choose to telegraph Colonel Roper, turn to PAGE 87.

If you choose to take the stage to Fort Benner, turn to PAGE 7.

You rush into the gunsmith shop and look around frantically for a fire extinguisher, but fire extinguishers haven't been invented yet. You begin to realize that it will be nearly impossible for you to put out the fire by yourself. But what if you had some help? Like maybe from the three Harley brothers, who are standing in the doorway.

The only way to get their help is to give them a *reason* to stomp out the spreading fire. So you give them that reason by grabbing the sacks of stolen money and throwing them into the back of the shop, right near the barrel of gunpowder.

They can't believe what they've just seen — heavy bags of money floating through the air! Two of the Harley brothers instantly scramble into the burning store and start fighting the blaze so they can recover their ill-gotten gains. But the third Harley brother, the one from whom you snatched the money, has wheeled around.

"I'm gonna fill you full of lead!" he declares, pointing the muzzle of his pistol right at your heart.

You laugh and make a funny face at him. After all, you're invisible, right?

If you think you're still invisible, turn to PAGE 39.

If you think you're in deep trouble, turn to PAGE 43.

34

You climb inside a big wooden cask of root beer and pull the lid on over your head, leaving it open just a crack for air so you can breathe.

The root beer comes right up to your chin and it's nice and cold. Too bad it doesn't stay that way.

As the saloon continues to burn, the temperature slowly rises. At first the sudsy liquid loses the sharp bite of its coolness. You figure that's just because you're getting used to it. But then the root beer turns warm, like bathwater, and then it starts to get downright hot!

You peak outside the barrel and find that the upper floors of the saloon have collapsed down into the cellar and you're surrounded by a sea of flames. The heat is unbearable . . . and the root beer is beginning to scald your skin.

You're actually boiling alive!

Right then and there you make a solemn vow. You'll never do anything bad ever again as long as you live; you'll help old ladies across the street every chance you get; you won't fight with your little brother; from now on you'll eat all your vegetables — even asparagus; you'll do anything — ANYTHING — if only you get out of this alive!

Go to PAGE 89.

ROOTBEER

36

Before Benedict Arnold can pull the trigger, you dive into the cold waters of the Delaware River. His bullet slams into a piece of ice about a foot away. Now that he's missed, you think you're safe.

Except you're not.

You try to swim, but it's impossible. The freezing water has made you numb, and your saturated clothing is pulling you down into the dark depths!

The water begins swirling around you, faster and faster, like a whirlpool. Everything is spinning and you can't tell the surface from the bottom. You're drowning, yet somewhere inside your brain you hear a voice saying, "Hold on . . . Hold on . . . Hold on . . ."

Hold on to what? Hurry and turn to PAGE 67!

"Look for my mount and my pack horse on the other side of the hill. I'll hold 'em off while you fellas make a run for it," orders Kid Colt. "Now get goin'!"

He's a hero right out of the movies, you think. But if the Harley brothers get him, then the outlaw gang will come after you and the old man — and they'll surely catch you. No, you can't run. Your best chance is to help Kid Colt defeat the Harley brothers right here and now. But how?

Two different ideas occur to you. The first one is that you could get a rope and lasso the outlaws from behind while they're busy fighting Kid Colt. The second idea is that you could steal the Harley brothers' horses and leave the outlaws stranded at the water hole while you, the old prospector, and Kid Colt make your getaway.

Which plan do you think has the best chance for success?

If you choose to lasso the outlaws, turn to PAGE 49.

If you choose to strand the outlaws without their horses, turn to PAGE 86.

38

You scramble up the spiral stairway to the bell tower of the church and throw all your weight onto the heavy rope that rings the bell. You ring it a dozen times, but nothing happens.

Suddenly, you hear footsteps down below. Somebody is climbing the stairs to the bell tower. Is it one of the Harley brothers? All of the Harley brothers?

As the footsteps get closer, you realize there's no escape. You're trapped in the steeple! With your blood pounding through your veins, you watch as the bell tower door slowly creaks open.

It's the tour guide!

"Am I glad to see you!" you exclaim, letting out the breath you've been holding for the last two minutes.

The tour guide smiles and shakes his head. "It's a weird thing, but whenever anybody gets lost from one of my groups, I usually find him here in the bell tower. I wonder why!"

THE END

You're pretty sure you are invisible — but you'd better test it out anyway. You take a step to your left. The outlaw's pistol follows your movement. You take another step . . . and the gun is *still* trained on your heart!

"It must be sheer luck," you mutter. "He can't really see me."

The tall Harley brother smiles. "Sure, I see ya. You're not a ghost — *yet!*"

He cocks his pistol and starts to squeeze the trigger.

Turn to — gulp — PAGE 57.

40

With your horse galloping at breakneck speed, you hold on for dear life. And your dear life is nearly over when, after a five-mile run, your horse suddenly bucks and throws you. Luckily, though, you're not hurt — you just land in a bruised heap on the desert floor. Much worse than your aches and pains is the fact that your horse is running away with your only canteen!

Trying to look on the bright side, you see that the mountain range is much closer. At least your horse seemed to run in the right direction. Fort Benner should be just on the other side of the pass. You figure you might still be able to walk there in time to save Goldspur.

You get up and glance to the left — and see something that stops you cold. There's a second mountain range! You're all turned around. Which is the one that leads to Fort Benner? If you make the wrong choice, you'll almost certainly die of thirst!

If you choose to set off for the mountain range on your left, turn to PAGE 48.

If you choose to set off for the mountain range in front of you, turn to PAGE 54.

You figure the best defense is a good offense — so instead of trying to run away, you attack!

You dive at Benedict Arnold's legs just as he fires his pistol. The ball of lead screams right over your head, hitting nothing except a few unlucky strands of hair.

That was close!

Now it's your turn. You try to knock the infamous traitor off his feet. Except you've got one problem. Though his gun may be empty, his heavy, metal gunbarrel still makes a dandy weapon, and he clunks you over the head with it.

It feels like an explosion inside your brain! For a long moment you don't know where you are. You go completely blank, then feel yourself falling . . . falling . . . falling . . .

Hurry and turn to PAGE 67!

A farmer's wagon rolls lazily by on its way out of town. You make it onto the wagon without the driver seeing you. So far, so good. To play it safe, you cover yourself with a blanket until you're sure you're out of Goldspur.

Lying in the darkness of the wagon bed, you can't see a thing. The clip-clop of the horses' hooves and the rattle of the rickety wagon is all you can hear. After a few minutes, you think you must surely be out of danger.

You couldn't be more wrong.

In the next instant, the wagon comes to a halt and the blanket that's hiding you is pulled away roughly. Standing in front of you is a knight in shining armor—and he's holding the sharp blade of a sword against your neck. Beside him stands a tall man.

"King Arthur," says the knight, "I've captured a strangely dressed wizard."

Uh oh! You've traveled from the legend of Goldspur to the legend of King Arthur!

If you think you'll get the help of the king by explaining that you're a time traveler, turn to PAGE 65.

If you think you've got a better chance of getting out of this by pretending to be a wizard, turn to PAGE 52.

"You got a lotta gumption, kid," laughs the outlaw, lowering his pistol. "I don't know many folks with the courage to make faces when they're lookin' down the barrel of a gun."

"I guess this means I'm not invisible, huh?"

"Invisible!" bellows the badman, slapping his thigh. "I like that. You're right funny, pardner."

"I'm glad you think so," you reply, relieved that he hasn't put a bullet between your eyes . . . yet.

"Yup. You've got plenty of gumption, all right. We could use someone like you in our gang. Whaddya say? You want to join up with us?"

"Me?" you blurt out. "Are you serious?"

"I'm so serious," he says as he cocks his pistol, "that if you don't join us, I'm gonna have to kill you. After all, I can't have a brave kid like you against us, now can I?"

You'd rather be a live outlaw than a dead kid, so you join up. What you don't know is that the people of Goldspur have planned a surprise party for all the members of the Harley gang. The surprising part of the party is that it's a necktie party—otherwise known as a *hanging*!

THE END

"Well, old timer," you say to the prospector, "I guess we're going to die without ever seeing all that gold."

"What gold?" demands the outlaw leader, signaling the others to lower their pistols.

"The gold my partner here found up in the hills," you reply.

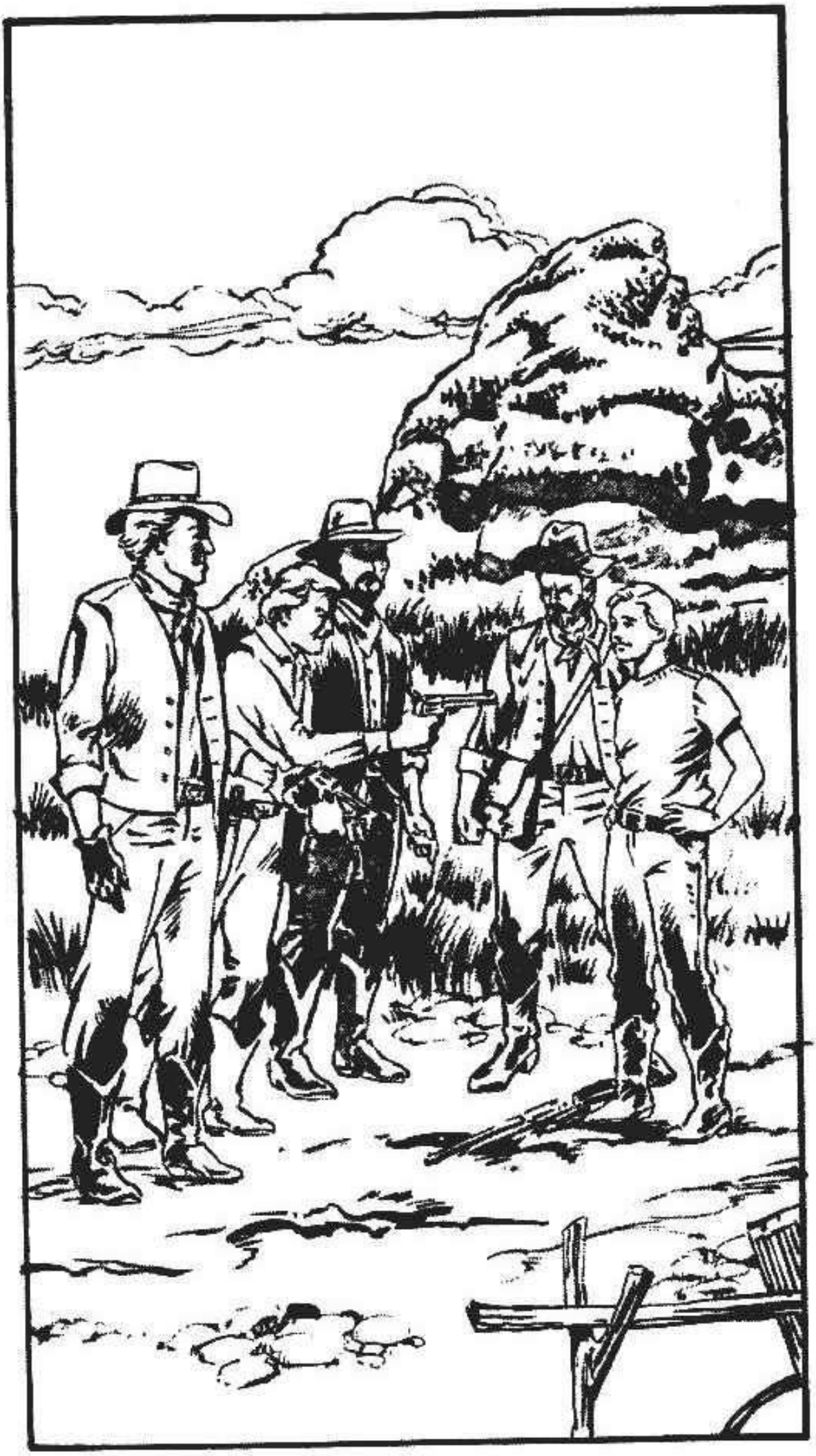
Livid with rage, the old prospector yells, "Why in tarnation did you tell them about my mine!" He gets so angry about it that he convinces at least two of the Harley brothers that you're telling the truth—that there really is a gold mine.

But the third—and obviously youngest — Harley brother angrily insists, "Let's kill 'em now! We got all the loot we need from Goldspur. The kid's just bluffin'!"

"There's no such thing as enough loot," corrects the leader of the gang. "We'll make 'em show us the mine in the morning. In the meantime, don't you be stickin' these folks with your knife during the night, you hear?"

"I don't care what you say . . . and stop bossin' me around! I still say we should kill 'em."

Go to PAGE 90.



46

When the flash of light fades away, you find you're no longer on the road to Fort Benner. In fact, you're not even in the Old West anymore. Unfortunately for you, however, you haven't returned to the present either. You've been transported to yet another time—the Stone Age!

But don't despair. You're still holding the wheel from the stagecoach. While no one will ever know your name, *you're the one who "invents" the wheel!* Thanks to you, mankind really gets rolling!

THE END

"You can have this," you offer, showing him your watch, "if you take me to Fort Benner."

He looks at it dubiously. "How'd ya get that silly picture underneath the glass?"

"It's a little complicated to explain," you begin.

"Well," he snorts irritably, "tell me about it when ya got an answer. In the meantime, I've got a schedule to keep!" With that, the driver jumps onto the stage, snaps his whip over a team of six horses, and then thunders out of town, kicking up a cloud of dust all around you.

Turn to PAGE 92.

You decide that the mountain range to the left is the one that you want. You start walking toward it. You walk for miles and miles under the blazing hot sun. It must be at least 120 degrees and there isn't a speck of shade anywhere. Your mouth is so dry it feels like day-old mashed potatoes. It's strange, but the mountains appeared to be really close when you started, yet they don't seem any nearer now after all these hours of trudging through the desert.

The sun keeps beating down on you, but you keep walking. You have no choice. Maybe, just maybe, you'll find a cool spring at the foot of the mountains. It's the only thought that keeps you going.

In the late afternoon, when the shadows are at their longest, you see a sparkling pool of water shimmering in the distance.

"It's just a mirage," you say to yourself as you stumble on. And there, off to the right, you finally see the mountain pass. Or is that a mirage, too?

Which one, if either, is real: the water hole or the mountain pass?

If you think the water hole is real, turn to PAGE 50.

If you think the mountain pass is real, turn to PAGE 55.

You grab a rope from Kid Colt's pack horse and then race back to the scene of the shootout.

"Now let me see," you mutter as you fumble with the heavy rope. You've never tied a lasso before, but you've seen it done in cowboy movies. "Loop here, no, no . . . loop across there, no, that's no good . . . twist here . . . " Just when you think it's hopeless, the rope falls into the shape of a lasso and stays that way.

With stabs of gunfire cracking through the darkness, you sneak around behind the Harley brothers and prepare to toss your lasso. You swing it high in the air with all your might—and it unfurls into a tangled knot at your feet.

Maybe this wasn't such a hot idea, after all. But there's still time for another plan.

Go on to PAGE 59.

When you get within ten feet of the spring, you can hear the water bubbling. It's real! But so is the voice from behind a rock that calls out, "Take one more step and you're dead! I've got you covered and I'm warnin' ya—I'll use this here shotgun if ya make me."

"I just want some water," you plead.

"I'll be helpin' no outlaws, thank you," shouts the hidden gunman.

"I'm no outlaw," you answer. "Just look at me. I'm a kid!"

"What's that? Did you say you're 'The Kid' . . . Kid Colt?" calls out the man behind the rock.

Should you play along and claim to be Kid Colt? It might be the name of someone he trusts—or it just might be a name that gets your head blown off.

If you choose to go by the name of Kid Colt, turn to PAGE 56.

If you choose to go by your own name, turn to PAGE 91.

You reach out with both hands and tickle the outlaw with your fingers. He starts twitching and giggling. Soon he is shaking with uncontrollable laughter.

"What's the joke, Jud?" asks the tallest of the other two brothers.

"I . . . I don't know," gasps Jud between roars of laughter. And right then he drops the money and doubles over in hysterics.

Just as you bend over to pick up the three sacks, the tall Harley brother angrily shouts, "Since when is robbin' a town so all-fired funny? Get on your feet and pick up this money!" With that, he kicks at the sacks to show his displeasure. And, at the same time, he kicks you right in the posterior, sending you flying head over heels into the burning gunsmith shop.

Your plan, it seems, was just a half-baked idea after all. Now, it's completely baked—and so are you!

THE END

Hiding your fear, you boldly declare, "You bet I'm a wizard! And if I were you, I'd put down that sword. You wouldn't like it very much if I turned you into a can of tuna."

"What is a 'can of tuna'?" asks the knight, perplexed.

"Believe me, you wouldn't like it," you try to explain. "It's terrible—even with mayonnaise!"

The famed knight doesn't have the slightest idea what you're talking about, but he lowers his sword anyway.

"Methinks this strange creature is a demon from another world," exclaims the king. "Merlin!" he cries. "Merlin!"

The king's sorcerer suddenly appears out of a puff of smoke. You hadn't counted on a real wizard showing up. That changes things—a lot!

"Hey, look," you begin, "I didn't mean—"

Before you can explain yourself, Merlin zaps you with one of his magic spells, turning you into a round table . . . *The* Round Table. You're famous! You wouldn't mind serving under King Arthur, but this isn't exactly what you had in mind.

THE END

The man who pulled you out of the fire is wearing a shiny tin star on his chest!

"Sheriff," you begin breathlessly, "I can't tell you how glad I am to see you."

"Why, thank you kindly," drawls the local lawman.

"The Harley brothers set fire to the saloon and—"

"Don't you worry about the Harley brothers," says the sheriff angrily, cutting you off.

You like the sheriff's no-nonsense attitude. Now here's a real Western hero, you decide. And in order to impress the lawman, you tell him how you almost burned the money they had stolen from the bank.

"Well, now," he says, obviously looking at you in a new light, "you're a pretty smart kid. I think you had better come along with me."

Turn to PAGE 61.

54

The mountain range straight ahead of you is closer than the one to the left, and it doesn't take long to reach it. Luckily, you quickly find the pass that leads through to the other side. It should lead you to Fort Benner . . . if you have chosen the right mountain range.

It's a steep, slow climb and the sun is getting lower in the sky. If you don't get to Fort Benner soon, it'll be too late to help Goldspur.

After another half hour, you suddenly notice you're no longer walking uphill. You're on your way down the far side of the pass. And when you make a sharp turn on the narrow trail, you can see the valley down below. *And . . . is that the fort down there?*

Hurry and turn to PAGE 63.

With every step you take, you hope that the pass leading up through the mountains won't suddenly vanish into thin air. But while the pass never disappears, you never reach it, either. It hovers in front of you, always at the same unreachable distance, a figment of your imagination.

You're in big trouble now! You can't backtrack to the water hole (assuming it was real) because it's much too far away. It's all over—you're doomed to die a horrible death. Boy, it's a good thing this is only a story.

THE END

"Yeah, I'm Kid Colt," you call out uneasily, hoping the gunman's reply won't come from the twin barrels of his shotgun.

"Boy, am I glad it's you," he replies with relief. "I was a dumb fool for leavin' my spectacles back in the mine. I can't see a danged thing without 'em."

An old prospector with gray hair and a bushy beard appears from behind the rock. He squints at you and adds, "I admit I don't see well, but you look to have changed quite a bit, Kid."

"I guess I have."

"Well, I suppose everybody changes out here in the West," concedes the old man.

While you talk with him, you quench your thirst at the water hole.

"It's getting dark," says the old prospector. "I guess we'd better bed down here for the night. We'll need to get an early start tomorrow."

With a shock, you realize that it's too late to help Goldspur. Now all that's left is to help yourself.

"Where are we going tomorrow?" you ask.

Right now go to PAGE 68.

You've got seconds to live.

"Look!" you cry out. "Your brothers are caught in the fire!" Startled, he spins around to look back into the gunsmith shop.

This is your only chance.

While *he* sees that his two brothers have put out the blaze and they're now safely leaving the building with three sacks of money, *you're* dashing into the cover of the Goldspur Saloon. And just in time. All three Harley brothers start shooting at you just as you dive through the swinging doors.

"Hey, is that the back door?" you ask the bartender. "I've got to get out of here!"

"There ain't no back door," he says. "That leads to the cellar. You might as well have a drink," he offers.

You shake your head. "I'm not old enough."

"But you can drink *this*," he suggests, holding up a strange bubbling green concoction. "It's the answer to all your problems," he adds mysteriously.

If you choose to gulp down the bartender's drink, do it now, then turn to PAGE 60.

If you'd rather take your chances down in the cellar, turn to PAGE 66.

"Tell your brothers to drop their guns or I'll put a hole in you that a horse could ride through," orders the man with the pistol.

"My brothers?" you exclaim in surprise. "Don't tell me you think I'm one of the outlaws?"

"Well, aren't you?"

"No. I thought *you* were."

"Me? That's ridiculous. I'm a trooper in the Seventh Cavalry of Fort Benner. After one of our patrols rode by Goldspur earlier tonight, my commanding officer ordered every available man—no matter who he was—to scout for these outlaws here. And now that I found them, I sure wish I was back with the troops doing my regular job as bugler."

Your eyes instantly light up with an idea.

Go on to PAGE 75.

You drop the tangled rope and race as fast as you can toward the outlaws. For your new plan to work, you've got to reach them before they see you.

You're 30 feet away . . . 20 . . . 15 . . .

The Harley brother closest to you starts to turn.

You're ten feet away . . . five feet.

The Harley brother sees you, but he doesn't react in time. You dive at his feet and knock him into his brothers. All three of them go tumbling over like bowling pins into the nearby watering hole. They jump up and aim their guns straight at you.

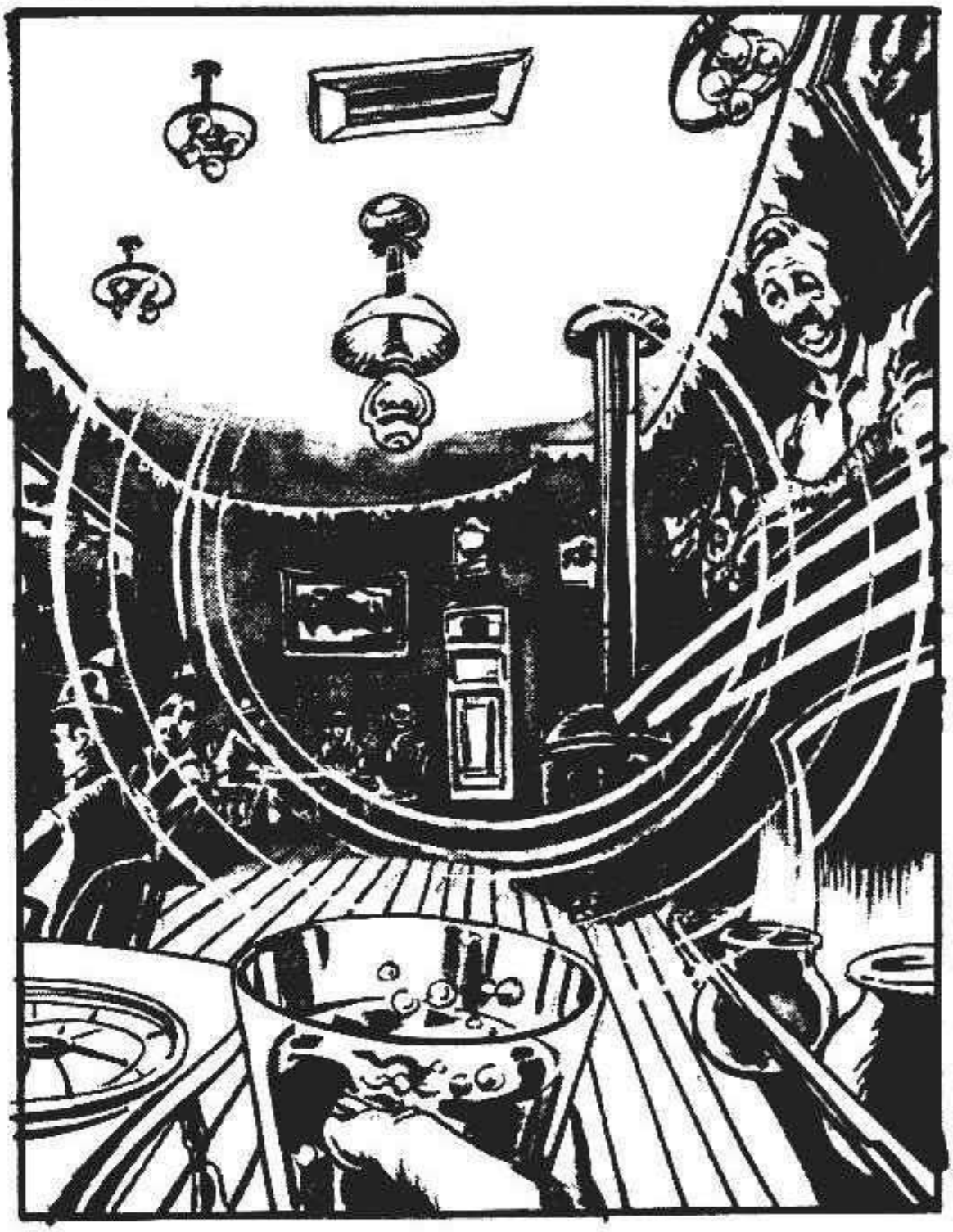
Click . . . click. With their water-logged guns, they can't shoot!

Kid Colt now joins you. "Move together there, Harleys. Your outlawin' days are over, thanks to this brave stranger," he says as he motions the Harley brothers to stand together so that you and the prospector can tie them securely with rope.

When the people of Goldspur hear of your bravery, they promptly appoint you sheriff. You go on to have an illustrious career as a gunfighter on the side of law and order. So, really, your tangle with the Harley brothers was just the beginning of your adventures in the Old West, rather than . . .

THE END

The room is spinning—or at least it seems that way to you. You feel as if you're whirling around and around in a never-ending circle. It's awful! Maybe this would all stop, though, if you could just get some air.



Take a deep breath and move on to PAGE 62.

Feeling as if maybe you were bragging, you modestly say, "I was just trying to do my part."

"And you almost did quite a job," he replies, as you struggle to keep up with the lawman's long-legged stride.

When you reach his office, he opens the door and motions for you to enter.

"Why are we going in here?" you ask.

"Want to show you who's in my jail," he says with a smile.

"You didn't catch the Harley brothers already, did you?" you ask incredulously.

"Come in and see for yourself."

Once inside, you see the jail is empty. Or at least it is until the sheriff pushes you into a cell and locks the door.

"I wanted you to see that you're in my jail," he laughs.

"What's going on?" you angrily demand.

"We haven't been properly introduced," snickers the lawman. "I'm Sheriff Joe Harley, and those boys out there are my nephews."

Looks like you've been literally "barred" from any further adventures.

THE END

62

It doesn't help. If anything, it's worse. You begin to sway back and forth, as if your body can't make up its mind whether it wants to go forward or backward. Finally, in desperation, you blindly take a step . . .

Stagger to *PAGE 60*.

As you hurry down the trail, the vague outline down below that might have been the fort is obscured from your view by high ridges and massive boulders. All you know is that there's *something* down there and you've got to get to it quickly.

The sun is sinking still lower and lower in the sky.

When you finally reach the bottom of the pass you can't believe your eyes!

Go on to PAGE 64.

There's a fort there, all right, but it's in ruins! In shocked disbelief, you walk slowly into the crumbling remains. Splintered, decaying wood from a demolished barracks lies bleached from the sun. A rusty old cannon is half-buried in the ground. The well is filled with sand . . . and there's not a living soul anywhere.

As the sun begins to set, the sky turns a brilliant red and the fort seems to glow like a red-hot coal in a campfire.

A strange sound starts reverberating in your ears. It bounces off the mountains behind you . . . wup—wup—wup—wup. It soon becomes louder and faster! WUP–WUP–WUP–WUP–WUP.

A terrible windstorm suddenly erupts and you're buffeted about in the wildly blowing gale. As you look up, though, you realize it's not a windstorm at all. It's a state police helicopter . . . and it's landing right near you. They've been looking for you all day!

Just wait till you try to tell them how you got there.

THE END

"Uh, excuse me, Your Highness," you say, waving your right hand at the monarch.

"Hark, it speaks!" cries Sir Lancelot. "Perhaps I should behead it now before it casts a spell on us."

"If I could just explain," you say nervously. "I'm really from the future. You see, these shoes are cowboy boots, these 'leggings' are blue jeans, and I'm just a regular kid who—"

"Cowboy boots?" King Arthur exclaims with horror. "The creature is wearing shoes made from cows and boys. Slay this evil being at once, Sir Lancelot!"

The sharp edge of the knight's sword swoops down toward your neck . . .

Hurry to PAGE 71.

You shiver in the cellar, watching the big, ferocious-looking Harley brothers through the cracks in the saloon floor above you.

"Where's that lousy kid?" booms one of the outlaws.

"I bet he's in the cellar," replies the big gorilla, pulling out his six-gun.

They guessed your hiding place! Will the fact that you've overheard them give you extra time to find a way out of there? Or should you use the element of surprise to turn the tables and trap them?

If you choose to look for a way out of the cellar, turn to PAGE 73.

If you choose to try to trap the Harley brothers, turn to PAGE 79.

"Hold onto your exams until I collect them at the end of class," announces your history teacher.

You look around, astonished. How did you get back here?

Before you can get your bearings, your teacher says, "Your first essay question on the American Revolution is this: 'Describe the events that led to the surprise Christmas Eve attack on Trenton by General Washington.' "

You write furiously, remembering every detail of what you saw and experienced. Too bad your teacher won't believe you and give you an A. But what difference does it make? After all, you've made the grade as an American, by George.

THE END

"To the gold mine, of course," he says with a laugh. "When you gave me that grubstake five years ago, Kid, I promised you half of everything—and I meant it. Now that I've struck it rich, you're gonna get your share!"

All that gold is very tempting, but you can't keep pretending that you're Kid Colt. Eventually, when you get to the mine, the old man will find his glasses and then he'll know the truth—*and he'll kill you*. No, you'll have to tell him who you really are, but you decide to do it in the morning. Maybe then the old man will realize you can be trusted—even though you're not the right "Kid."

Meanwhile, you lie down under the stars and try for the longest time to go to sleep. Just as you finally begin to doze off, you hear the sound of galloping horses.

"Somebody's coming," you whisper to the old prospector.

"I hear 'em," he replies in the darkness.

"What should we do?"

"Let's get up in the rocks," he suggests. "By the way," he adds, "I ain't much good with that gun without my glasses. In the dark, I'm even worse."

Find your way to PAGE 69.

Oh no! You were hoping the old man would do all the shooting!

"Since you're such a sharpshooter, Kid," the prospector continues, "I think *you* should take the shotgun."

This one is going to be hard to fake. You've never fired a gun in your life! If your marksmanship is really needed and you can't use the gun, you could both end up dead. Of course, these midnight riders might just be some harmless cowboys and you won't even need the gun.

If you choose to admit your lack of skill with a shotgun, turn to PAGE 74.

If you choose to keep pretending you're Kid Colt, turn to PAGE 81.

You cringe, expecting the cold blade to hit you any second, when a deep voice cries out behind you: "Wait!"

"Yeah, wait," you add weakly.

Sir Lancelot's blade stops just inches from your neck.

"You have some interest in this creature, Merlin?" asks the king.

A kind-looking man in a black robe walks up to you. "Yes, Your Highness, I do. I ask you to give me this young wizard's life."

Thank heaven King Arthur agrees!

Later, when the two of you are alone, you ask Merlin why he saved your life.

"Because my magic tells me you don't belong here." (Boy, is that the truth!) "You're from the future, aren't you?"

"Yes," you admit. And then, in a pleading voice, you ask, "Can your magic send me home?"

Go on to PAGE 72.

Merlin frowns. "I don't know," he says, tugging thoughtfully on his long, white beard. "You must have fallen through a crack in time. It happens rarely, but it has been known to occur."

This doesn't sound too hopeful to you, but Merlin continues. "I've been experimenting with a time travel potion. This is the perfect opportunity to test it out. You understand, of course, that your chances of making it back to your exact time are slim. Still," he says, handing you a little blue bottle, "you might just make it. But let me warn you: The power of this concoction will be affected by the color of your eyes. It works best with people whose eyes are brown. But you never know. Drink it, my young friend, and then hope for the best!"

You haven't got anything to lose. Hesitantly, you drink the potion.

If your eyes are any color except brown, turn to PAGE 18.

If your eyes are brown, turn to PAGE 80.

You spend precious time looking for a trap door that leads out of the cellar and to the street. There is, you discover, no such door.

They'll be coming for you any second now. You have no choice. You've got to hide.

Looking around in the inky darkness, you stumble into a big old iron stove. At least that'll stop any bullets heading your way. You climb inside it and wait. But it's awfully stuffy inside that old stove and you start to fidget. What's taking them so long? you wonder. You climb out of the stove to investigate. A minute later you know the reason. Smoke. They've set fire to the saloon!

If you choose to flee, turn to PAGE 83.

If you choose to stay where you are in the hope that the fire won't spread down to the cellar, turn to PAGE 28.

"I don't know how to tell you this," you begin, "but I've never fired a gun before. In fact, I'm not even Kid Colt."

"You always were a kidder, Kid," laughs the old man. "But this is no time to be joking around. Now here's the gun. We'd better get up those rocks quick."

Reluctantly, you take the heavy weapon and begin to lug it up toward the rocks above the spring. But before you can get there, three horsemen gallop right up to the water hole, spotting you when the moonlight reflects off the metal barrel of the shotgun.

"Hold it right there!" commands a booming voice.

You and the old prospector stop dead in your tracks.

"Drop that gun and come down here *real slow*."

The old prospector shakes his head. He wants you to shoot it out with them. Maybe Kid Colt would do it, but not you. You simply do as you're told.

When you reach the bottom of the hill, you realize, with a terrible shock, that the three men who've ridden into your camp are the Harley brothers! They've finished with Goldspur—and now it looks as if they're going to finish with you!

Turn to PAGE 15.

"Have you got your bugle with you?" you ask hopefully.

"Why, sure. Never go anywhere without it."

"Well then, blow the charge!"

"What?"

"Just blow it!"

He pulls out his big brass bugle and hits the thrilling notes of the charge. Then, in the deepest voice you can muster, you call out, "We've got you surrounded. Throw down your guns and put up your hands . . . or else we'll start shooting!"

Terrified, the Harley brothers throw down their weapons.

The bugler is the first one to rush out of his cover and pick up their guns.

"Where's the army?" asks the leader of the outlaws, looking all around.

"That's the whole army right there," says the bugler, pointing at you as you're joined by Kid Colt and the old prospector.

You did it! You captured the Harley brothers . . . this time. You may not be so lucky on your next visit to Goldspur—that is, if you've got the nerve to come back.

THE END

The entire two stories of the saloon above you are collapsing in fiery wreckage. Flaming beams are falling all around you. Desperately, you try to tip over one of the root-beer barrels, but you just don't have the strength. Meanwhile, hot cinders are falling on your bare skin and into your hair. Any second now, you'll catch fire and become a human torch.

Peering through the flames, you spot daylight above the crumbling foundation. If only you were a little stronger, you could knock the barrel over and spill its contents toward that opening.

Just then a white-hot piece of ash falls on your nose. That's just the incentive you needed! Strength you never knew you had surges through your body and *over goes the barrel*. Like a liquid blanket, the sudsy stuff smothers the fire in an instant.

Racing over the steaming pathway, you reach the far wall and then jump up toward the opening that leads to the street.

But you can't pull yourself up above the foundation!

The fire is once again closing in on you. It licks at your feet as you hopelessly claw at the top of the opening.

Go on to PAGE 77.

You're about to die in this blazing deathtrap . . . until a hand unexpectedly reaches down, grabs your arm, and pulls you up onto the street. At last you're saved! Or are you?

Who pulled you out of the fire? Turn to PAGE 53.

Ugh! That water tastes awful!

The old prospector cackles. "Don't stop now," he goads. "I thought you were thirsty!"

You *were* thirsty, but not anymore. You live . . . just long enough to close this book.

THE END

Under the cover of darkness, you plan a surprise trap for the Harley brothers. As quickly and as quietly as you can, you run up the rickety staircase and hide behind the door.

"I'll fill that kid so full of lead that even the two strongest men in Goldspur won't be able to pick up the body," you hear one of the outlaws crow.

"Yeah? Well, I'm gonna use my knife on that rascal," counters one of the other Harley brothers, "and when I'm through, he'll look just like a Thanksgiving turkey—after dinner!"

You swallow hard. "What am I doing trying to trap these hardened killers?" you ask yourself. Maybe you should try to escape, after all. This is your last chance to change your mind.

If you choose to see this through, turn to PAGE 82.

If you've changed your mind and now choose to look for a way out of the cellar, turn to PAGE 84.

80

A light flashes in your head, and suddenly you're back with your parents in the present—but you're not in Goldspur.

Before you realize what's happening, you hear a tour guide say, "It was exactly three o'clock—on this very day one hundred and fourteen years ago—that the great Chicago Fire devastated our fair city . . . "

A church bell in the distance begins to chime the hour: one . . . two . . . three . . .

You close your eyes. This can't be real, you tell yourself. But then you smell smoke!

"Fire! Fire!" you scream.

"Calm down, kid," says a man in the crowd in front of you. "If my cigar's bothering you, all you have to do is say so."

You open your eyes . . . and heave a sigh of relief.

THE END

"You keep the shotgun," you bluff. "Kid Colt has other plans."

"Oh, I get it," chuckles your companion. "You've been carryin' a hidden pistol all this time, haven't ya?"

It seems easier just to agree with him, so you tell him you've got a gun.

"Great!" he says with a smile. "Now we're ready for anything. Forget the rocks. We'll brave whoever it is right here!"

But you're not ready at all—and you're certainly not ready for the sight of a tall stranger galloping up to the water hole, trailing a pack horse behind him.

"Who are you?" demands the old man.

"Why, it's me," he replies with a grin. "Don't you recognize me? I'm Kid Colt!"

Uh oh.

Think fast and turn to PAGE 85.

It's too late to turn back now, you say to yourself. Your nerves are on edge but a few deep breaths help you regain self-control. This may be the last thing you ever do and you want to do it with courage.

Suddenly, the door bursts open. You're right behind it and its impact knocks the wind out of you. But you don't cry out. The Harley brothers still don't know you're there, and they rush past you and down the stairs into the dark cellar with their guns and knives at the ready.

Only you're more ready than they are.

When you get your breath back, you slip around to the other side of the door and now, from *outside*, you slam it shut and lock it!

"Is there any other way out of that cellar?" you ask the bartender.

"Nope," he replies with a big smile. "I think you've just caught yourself one ornery bunch of outlaws."

You may be stuck in the past forever, but so what? You're a hero!

THE END

You race up the stairs that lead back to the saloon. The door you came in is now locked. Throwing your entire weight against the door, you try to break it down. The door doesn't budge. "Help! Help me!" you cry, but no help is coming. A flaming beam of wood crashes down and nearly hits you. It looks as if you are not going to be able to get out of this cellar, after all. What now?

Keep your head down and crawl on over to PAGE 28.

84

Bad choice. You wasted too much time listening to the Harley brothers through the door and not enough time looking for a way out. They catch you and . . . well . . . let's just say that you suffer a fate worse than cleaning your room. A lot worse!

THE END

"If you're Kid Colt, then who—"

Before the old prospector can finish the sentence, you're running as fast as you can toward the rocks.

"I'll get him!" yells the real Kid Colt.

"Careful. He's got a gun," warns the old man.

"That don't matter," Kid Colt replies with confidence, "so do I."

Keep running to PAGE 93.

86

On your way to the tethered horses, you bump into someone in the darkness. That someone sticks the muzzle of a six-gun in your ribs.

"Goin' someplace?" asks a gruff voice.

"I guess not," you reply, defeated, waiting for him to pull the trigger.

Turn to PAGE 58.

At the edge of town, you find the telegraph office. You quickly step inside and announce, "I must send a message to Fort Benner."

"Forget it," the old telegraph operator grumbles. "I can't even send a message across the street. The wires are down."

"When will they be fixed?" you ask.

"Couple of days," he replies.

"That's terrible! Look," you begin, falling back on your other alternative, "when's the next stagecoach to Fort Benner?"

"Tomorrow."

"There's no stage today?" you ask in surprise.

"Sure," he says, pointing out the window toward the desert. "See that cloud of dust down the road? That's today's stage to Fort Benner. You missed it by about five minutes."

A moment later you hear gunfire. The Harley brothers are making their move. And there is no way to stop them. You decide to stay at the edge of town with the old telegraph operator and watch everything from a distance.

When this terrible day is over, you're the one who creates the legend of the Ghost Riders of Goldspur. In fact, the eyewitness account that's in the tour guide book lists you as the author!

THE END

"You and I both know we can never defeat the king. Wouldn't it be best to run up the white flag? You can surrender right across the Delaware in Trenton."

"Maybe you're right, Benedict," says General Washington with sad reluctance. "Maybe you're right. Without a big victory soon, our cause is doomed."

You've heard enough. You pop out of the bushes and exclaim, "General Washington, excuse me for eavesdropping, but—"

"Who are you?" demands the future Father of Our Country.

"I'm an American," you answer proudly.

He smiles broadly. "Well then, my young patriot, what is it you wish to tell me?"

General Washington is waiting. Hurry and turn to PAGE 25.

Without warning, you hear a popping noise in your ears, then everything goes black! When you come to, you are standing right outside your own home!

Suddenly you see an old lady standing on the corner. It is your first chance to make good on the solemn vow that must have gotten you home. You rush over and take her arm.

"Unhand me," she yells. "You young people are all alike. Think you can push old people out of your way, do you?" Before you can explain, the old lady starts batting you with her purse.

Backing off, you walk through your kitchen door. The first thing you see is your little brother using your new tape cassettes as boats in the kitchen sink. You run over angrily, but, remembering your vow, you just smile sweetly.

Then your mother comes through the door. She smiles at you. "Hi, dear. You're just in time for supper," she says. "I made asparagus souffle!"

"Ugh—I mean, uh, good," you mumble. Boy, this is going to be tough! In fact, that fiery saloon in Goldspur is starting to look better and better!

THE END

The leader of the gang looks sternly at his hot-headed younger brother and says, "Shut-up." Then he orders him to tie you and the old man together. Later, you spot just two of the three Harley brothers bedding down near the edge of the water hole.

Where's the third outlaw?

Suddenly you hear a rustling sound behind you in the bushes . . .

If you think it's the young Harley brother coming to get you, turn to PAGE 26.

If you think it might be help on the way, turn to PAGE 30.

"I think you've got me confused with somebody else," you own up.

"You're not Kid Colt?"

"No," you reply. You tell him your full name.

"That's a funny handle for an outlaw," he says.

"I keep telling you, I'm not an outlaw!"

"That's right, you do," he admits, "but what if I told you that this here water is poisoned? Would you believe me?"

"No. If it was poisoned, you wouldn't be here," you answer, using solid logic.

He steps out from behind the rock and you see a grizzled old prospector with gray hair, a bushy beard, and a big double-barreled shotgun aimed right at your head.

With a toothless grin, he smiles and says, "If you're so sure that the water is okay, then be my guest—go ahead and drink!"

You call his bluff and rush right up to the edge of the spring . . .

Let's hope you're right about that water. Hurry and turn to PAGE 78.

92

As the stagecoach throws dust in your face, you try to stop coughing. You look at your watch with disgust. That's when you notice that the second hand has stopped. You tap the watch until it starts moving again.

"You okay?" asks your father.

You look up, startled.

"That cough . . . are you okay?" he repeats.

You nod your head while gasping for air. It's amazing, but you're back in the present—that is, if you ever left. You'll never know for sure if what you experienced was real until you choose once more to open this book—and become a part once again of the strange and unexplainable legend of Goldspur.

THE END

You're running blindly up the hill, past the rocks. You just want to get away—far away! Kid Colt is racing after you on horseback, his pistol raised to shoot you. Just then you top the rise above the rocks and come upon a deep ravine with mist rising out of its bottomless depths. Kid Colt is about to fire his pistol. You have no choice. With a mighty leap, you throw yourself through the mist and jump over the murky crevice.

On the other side, the first thing you see is a billboard with a cowboy driving a Ford Mustang. And just beyond that, there's a Burger King.

Well, you wanted to get far away. One hundred years is pretty far away, isn't it?

THE END

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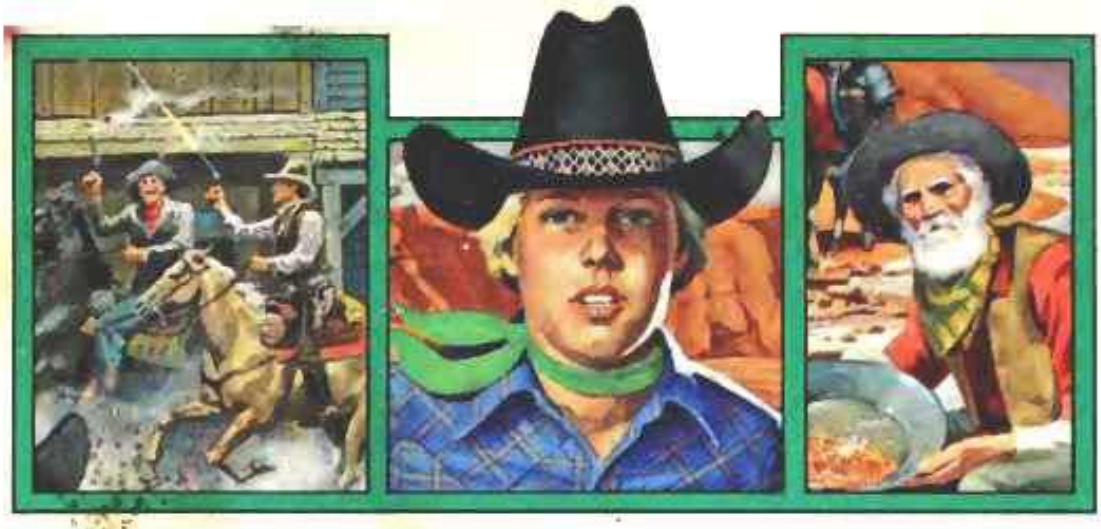

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ISBN 0-590-33235-X

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Cover Illustration: Bart Jerner